

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 26, 1965

PM

Statement by Senator J. W. Fulbright  
Upon Introduction of Bill to Amend  
The Foreign Agents Registration Act

Mr. President:

On behalf of the senior Senator from Iowa and myself, I reintroduce a bill to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act of 1938. This is the same bill that passed the Senate last session. I am pleased to report that Congressman Celler, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, which has jurisdiction over this subject on that side, has introduced an identical bill.

The basic purpose of this bill is to update the Foreign Agents Registration Act to reflect the changes in the nature of the United States role in world affairs today. As our interests throughout the world have multiplied, the efforts of foreign interests to influence American foreign policy have become correspondingly greater and more subtle.

In order to determine the extent of the use of nondiplomatic means to influence American policy, in 1961 the Committee on Foreign Relations ordered a preliminary staff investigation to look into incidents which had come to its attention. The staff investigation uncovered evidence of extensive activities which were not subject to the public scrutiny they deserved and, at the Committee's request, the Senate agreed to a resolution authorizing a full investigation into the subject. The Committee's investigation began in 1962 and continued through most of 1963. On September 10 of that year, a bill was introduced to amend the Foreign Agents Registration Act substantially in accord with the provisions of the bill being introduced today. Full public hearings were held on the bill and it was reported to the Senate with amendments on February 21 of last year.

The Committee has studied at great length both the conditions which prompted the bill and the provisions of the bill itself. The bill was debated thoroughly in the Senate and objection was raised to only one aspect of it. I believe that this objection was settled satisfactorily by adoption of an amendment offered by the senior Senator from New York (Senator Javits), even though I did not believe that the amendment was necessary. The major provisions of the bill as it passed the Senate and as it is being reintroduced today are:

1. Revised definitions for the terms "foreign principal," "agent of a foreign principal," and "political activities" plus a new term "political consultant" -- all of which are aimed at better focusing the act on those individuals performing political or semi-political activities.

2. An injunctive remedy is authorized for the Attorney General where compliance with either the act itself or the regulations issued under the act is considered inadequate.

3. Stricter requirements for disclosing political activities and expenditures as part of regular reports to the Department of Justice.

4. Prohibition of campaign contributions for or in behalf of a foreign principal in connection with any primary or general election for public office.

5. Prohibition of contingent fee contracts between agents and foreign principals based upon success in political activities to be undertaken by the agent.

6. Provision that a foreign agent appearing for or in the interest of his foreign principal before a congressional committee be required to identify himself fully as to his principals and file his latest registration statement as part of the committee hearing record.

7. Officers and employees of the U.S. Government are prohibited from acting as agents of foreign principals. Contract or part-time employees of the Federal Government may act as agents of foreign principals if the head of the employing agency certifies such employment is in the national interest and a copy of the certification is placed in the public file of the agent maintained by the Department of Justice.

Since the bill did not pass the Senate until July 6, the House Judiciary Committee did not have sufficient time to consider the bill in detail last session. It should not be necessary for the Senate Committee to spend a great deal of time on the bill this session since we will not be covering any new ground. However, the Committee would, of course, be pleased to receive the views of individuals and organizations on aspects of interest to them which they believe warrant additional attention. I do hope that the Senate can pass the bill without unnecessary delay so that the House will have ample opportunity to give it careful study this session.

The Committee on Foreign Relations has in its files much material that justifies additional hearings on the activities of foreign lobbyists but it does not believe that exposure for exposure's sake is a proper activity for a Congressional investigation. The Committee takes the view that legislation - not headlines - is the end objective of legislative activity. And this Committee has adhered to that principle in considering this difficult subject in the past. This approach has, we believe, produced a fair and reasonable bill. However, if the Senate feels that further investigations are needed, I will be glad to cooperate in bringing additional information bearing on the problem to public attention.

I ask unanimous consent to have the text of the bill printed at this point in the Record.

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